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In re Application of
Thomas Schulte et al
Application No. 09/932,687
Filed: August 17, 2001
Attorney Docket No. MICRO1200

: OFFICE OF PETITIONS
:
: DECISION ON PETITION
: UNDER 37 CFR 1.78(a)(6)
:

This is a decision on the petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(6), filed October 9, 2003, to accept an unintentionally delayed claim under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) for the benefit of prior-filed provisional Application No. 60/281,114, filed April 3, 2001.

The petition is **DISMISSED**.

Any request for reconsideration must be filed within **TWO MONTHS** from the mail date of this decision. Note 37 CFR 1.181(f).

A petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(6) is only applicable to those applications filed on or after November 29, 2000. Further, the petition is appropriate only after expiration of the period specified in 37 CFR 1.78(a)(5)(ii) and must be filed during the pendency of the nonprovisional application. In addition, the petition must be accompanied by:

- (1) the reference required by 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) and 37 CFR 1.78(a)(5)(i) to the prior-filed application, unless previously submitted;¹
- (2) the surcharge set forth in § 1.17(t); and
- (3) a statement that the entire delay between the date the claim was due under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(5)(ii) and the date the claim was filed was unintentional. The Commissioner may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional.

The instant pending nonprovisional application was filed on August 17, 2001. A reference to the prior-filed provisional application has been included in an amendment to the first sentence of the specification following the title.

¹ Any nonprovisional application claiming the benefit of one or more prior-filed provisional applications must contain or be amended to contain a reference (i.e., in an amendment to the first line of the specification following the title or in an application data sheet (ADS)) to each such prior-filed provisional application, identifying it as a provisional application, and including the application number (consisting of the series code and serial number).

However, the amendment is not acceptable as drafted since it improperly incorporates by reference the prior-filed application. Petitioner's attention is directed to Dart Industries v. Banner, 636 F.2d 684, 207 USPQ 273 (C.A.D.C. 1980), where the court drew a distinction between a permissible 35 U.S.C. § 120 statement and the impermissible introduction of new matter by way of incorporation by reference in a 35 U.S.C. § 120 statement. The court specifically stated:

Section 120 merely provides a mechanism whereby an application becomes entitled to benefit of the filing date of an earlier application disclosing the same subject matter. Common subject matter must be disclosed, in both applications, either specifically or by an express incorporation-by-reference of prior disclosed subject matter. Nothing in section 120 itself operates to carry forward any disclosure from an earlier application. *In re deSeversky*, *supra* at 674, 177 USPQ at 146-147. Section 120 contains no magical disclosure-augmenting powers able to pierce new matter barriers. It cannot, therefore, "limit" the absolute and express prohibition against new matter contained in section 251.

In order for the incorporation by reference statement to be effective as a proper safeguard against the omission of a portion of a prior application, the incorporation by reference statement must be included in the specification-as-filed, or in an amendment specifically referred to in an oath or declaration executing the application. *See In re de Seversky*, *supra*. *Note also* MPEP 201.06(c).

Accordingly, before the petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(6) can be granted, a substitute amendment² deleting the incorporation by reference statement to the prior-filed provisional application along with a renewed petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(6), is required.

In order to expedite consideration, petitioner may wish to submit the substitute amendment and renewed petition by facsimile transmission to the number indicated below and to the attention of Karen Creasy .

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

By mail: U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
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²Note 37 CFR 1.121

By hand: Crystal Plaza Four, Suite 3C23
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Any questions concerning this matter may be directed to Karen Creasy at (703) 305-8859.


Frances Hicks
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